

Queensland Climate Transition Bill 2023

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Submission to the Queensland Climate Transition Bill 2023

A coordinated and well planned transition is needed to ensure communities, workers and the Queensland economy enjoy the potential benefits of a fast and fair transition.

Recommendations:

- Recommendation 1:** Pass the Bill and support the establishment of a Queensland Climate Transition Authority, and that the Queensland Government support the establishment of and work with a National Energy Transition Authority (NETA).
- Recommendation 2:** Include civil society and community representation listed as qualifications and experience required of the Queensland Climate Transition Authority board.
- Recommendation 3:** Raise Queensland climate ambition through the Bill, legislating for targets of 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2035.
- Recommendation 4:** Include a ban on new development approvals for coal, oil and gas.

Introduction

ACF thanks Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar, and the State Development and Regional Industries Committee, for the opportunity to make a submission to the *Queensland Climate Transition Bill 2023* and the establishment of a new statutory authority, the *Queensland Climate Transition Authority (QCTA)*.

Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar, introduced the *Queensland Climate Transition Bill 2023* into the Queensland Parliament on 15 March 2023. The Bill has been referred to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for consideration.

ACF strongly supports rapid decarbonisation of the Queensland economy, and that the target should be 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels. There are significant impacts above 1.5°C of warming to the great Barrier Reef, Queensland natural areas, and the social and economic impacts will be felt across society. Ending new fossil fuel developments is central to our international commitment to keep global warming below 2°C and ideally below 1.5°. The current Queensland renewable energy and decarbonisation targets and climate action will not achieve this.

ACF has long supported a *Queensland Transition Authority* and supports the objectives of the Bill to:

- establish the *Queensland Climate Transition Authority (QCTA)*;



- raise Queensland's mitigation ambition and achieve science-based targets by setting a 75% emissions reduction target by 2030, to reach net zero by 2035;
- legislate a target to phase out fossil fuel exports by 2030, and
- work with communities, workers, industry and government agencies to effectively plan for the transition.

To achieve this, the Bill proposes to establish a new statutory authority, the *Queensland Climate Transition Authority* (QCTA), to develop and implement a strategic climate transition plan for Queensland that ensures consultation, compensation, training and job opportunities for workers and local communities affected by the transition away from fossil fuels. Furthermore, the Bill proposes the introduction of an immediate moratorium on new coal, oil, and gas projects.

The transition from fossil fuels to a clean renewable energy based economy needs to be both fast and well planned, considering the needs of many affected communities, workers and industries. Many of Queensland's trading partners have decarbonisation plans and are exiting fossil fuels. This makes Queensland particularly vulnerable, but also presents us with a massive opportunity. Consequently, Queensland must plan for a reduction in export opportunities, and this must be well planned for, from the local, state and national levels. Without coordinated planning across all levels of government, the Queensland government risks losing the social licence needed for a fast and fair transition. While the recently released Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (2022), its Jobs Guarantee and Energy Workers Charter demonstrate raised ambition, they will not achieve adequate and broad engagement, place based outcomes, cover both domestic and export industries, or the planning needed for a fast and fair transition. Such coordinated and effective transition planning will only occur through legislated action.

It is ACF's position that both state based Transition Authorities, such as the proposed QCTA, and a National Energy Transition Authority (NETA) are required. The QCTA would enable and streamline the development of further regional transition plans such as the Gladstone Region 10-Year Roadmap 2022–2032 (The Next Economy (TNE) 2022). The importance of such planning and leaderships must be a bipartisan priority at all levels of government.

ACF supports the passage of the Bill to both achieve science based decarbonisation targets, and to ensure the transition is well planned, achieving social, environmental; and economic outcomes for both domestic and export fossil fuel communities and workers in Queensland.

Without a state based Transition Authority, Queensland's risks the transition being poorly planned and managed for both domestic and export fossil fuel industries; communities will be left behind and their specific needs will remain unmet; industry and workers may miss targeted opportunities such as training; and Queensland may miss considerable economic opportunities and diversification, including in renewables, critical minerals needed for the transition, and opportunities outside of the energy sector, such as manufacturing, tourism and agriculture.



Queensland Energy Transition Authority

Recommendation 1: Pass the Bill and support the establishment of a Queensland Climate Transition Authority, and that the Queensland Government support the establishment of and work with a National Energy Transition Authority (NETA).

ACF has consistently advocated for both a Queensland Transition Authority and a National Energy Transition Authority (NETA). The bill establishes the Queensland Climate Transition Authority to develop a transition plan in consultation with unions, employers and community members involved in or affected by coal, oil and gas extraction for export. Not having some form of jurisdictional oversight may mean state based needs and co-ordination is missed out.

Support for this bill in no way detracts from ACFs position to establish a NETA, but we see the two bodies as mutually beneficial, indeed necessary to ensure jurisdictional needs are met. Only through a state based Transition Authority will Queensland government ensure the adequate and broad engagement and planning needed. In the event of a National Energy Transition Authority, authorities must furthermore be integrated to ensure consistency between local, state and federal agencies.

From the work of The Next Economy (2022), working closely with communities, industry, community based organisations, faith groups, economic development and business peak bodies, industry bodies across several sectors, employers, unions and local government, it is very clear that state (and federal) transition agencies are supported by a broad coalition of stakeholders. In fact, TNE (2022) found that:

“Transition authorities have proven a successful vehicle to support governments in this task by bringing together stakeholders from across government, industry and the community to plan and coordinate efforts to proactively manage the phase out of fossil fuels and expansion of renewable energy.”

State-based and a National Energy Transition Authority are ideas whose time has come.

Governance

Recommendation 2: Include civil society and community representation listed as qualifications and experience required of the Queensland Climate Transition Authority board.

ACF supports the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) proposal for a NETA (no publication date). We also broadly support its best practice principles, which are just as relevant for a Queensland transition authority. We do, however recommend a broader representation in the tripartite governance proposed. We recommend that the Bill includes civil society and community representation listed on the qualifications and experience of the QCTA board (Clause 35).



Climate Ambition

Recommendation 3: Raise and legislate for Queensland’s climate ambition through the Bill, legislating for targets of 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2035.

Queensland’s current stated targets are neither in line with the current science and our obligations under the Paris Agreement. This bill would legislate targets of 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2035. Such targets would ensure an emissions pathway for Australia to help limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

No new coal, oil or gas developments

Recommendation 4: Include a ban on new development approvals for coal, oil and gas.

The science is clear, we cannot tackle climate change if we continue to approve new coal, oil and gas developments. Queensland will not reach its climate targets if it has any new coal and gas. Queensland must implement an immediate ban on new coal, oil and gas approvals.

We need to limit warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. There are significant impacts above 1.5°C of warming to the great Barrier Reef, Queensland’s natural areas, and the social and economic impacts will be felt across society. Ending new fossil fuel developments and closing Australia’s outdated coal-burning power plants are central to our international commitment to keep global warming below 2°C and ideally below 1.5°. The current Queensland renewable energy and decarbonisation targets and action will not achieve this.

References

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), (no publication date). Energy Transition Authority: What Workers Need. <https://www.actu.org.au/media/1450304/energy-transition-authority-what-workers-need-actu.pdf>

The Next Economy (TNE) 2022, Gladstone Region 10-Year Roadmap 2022–2032. <https://nexteconomy.com.au/work/gladstone-regions-economic-transition-10-year-roadmap/>

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